

for generations that coral reefs form the fundamental building block of an intricate marine food chain, providing nutrients, food and habitats for a tremendous diversity of fish and other marine animals. And intuitively, we have all come to appreciate that without healthy coral reefs, our abundance of marine resources might soon come to a sudden end.

Unfortunately, the sad reality is that we have discovered that the coral reefs we depend on are under numerous threats. These threats come from many sources, including polluted run off, increased siltation, mining, and destructive fishing practices, notably the use of dynamite and cyanide, to name only a few. We have even come to appreciate that the decline in coral health could be linked to global climate change, and events such as El Nino.

But with recognition of the problem, and with increased resources to address it, we can begin to reverse the degradation of our coral reefs and achieve a sustainable balance towards the long-term conservation of these important marine ecosystems. Several recent activities, including the initiation of the International Coral Reef Initiative, the development of U.S. Coral Reef Initiative and the International Year of the Coral Reef, were all good beginnings. And just last week, the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force published a national action plan to conserve coral reefs. It is vital that we continue this positive momentum.

As the Senior Democrat on the Subcommittee on Fishery Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, I have enjoyed working collaboratively with Chairman SAXTON and his able staff to address my concerns and issues raised by other Democrats in order to develop this consensus legislation.

The legislation we introduce today addresses many of the priorities I consider essential to any comprehensive coral reef conservation bill. Perhaps most significant, the legislation would codify the Coral Reef Task Force established under Executive Order 13089 to give this panel the authority it needs to address the myriad of problems confronting coral reefs today.

Importantly, this legislation would require the Task Force to initiate fundamental baseline research and management activities, most notably, the mapping of all coral reef resources in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The bill would provide to the Task Force, through a National Program coordinated by the Department of Commerce, up to \$5 million per year for 4 years to initiate this and other baseline activities, especially the development of comprehensive coral reef monitoring and assessment programs. It is expected that scientists and resource managers will gain from this previously unavailable information new insights regarding how human activities and other environmental factors are contributing to the degradation of coral reef ecosystems, and optimistically, how this degradation might be reversed. To ensure the continued comment from a broad range of interests involved in the management of coral reefs, it is anticipated that those Regional Fishery Management Councils established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act which have corals within their jurisdiction, would be involved.

Of equal significance, this legislation would also authorize a coral reef conservation grant program to assist States and local commu-

nities in the protection, conservation and sustainable use of their coral reef resources. The bill would provide up to \$10 million per year for 4 years for coral reef conservation grants and it is expected that these grants will help improve local capabilities, raise local public awareness, and promote the long-term conservation and restoration of coral reef ecosystems. I am also pleased that this legislation would ensure the equitable distribution of grant funds to applicants in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

Allow me to close by simply saying that while this bill is not perfect, it is a fair and honorable compromise. The bill would establish a targeted, focused and locally-driven coral reef conservation program; importantly, a program grounded in science and built upon the ground-breaking and successful work of the Coral Reef Task Force. I commend Chairman SAXTON for his leadership and commitment to coral reef protection, and I thank my Democratic colleagues on the Fisheries Subcommittee who have worked with me throughout these negotiations.

A TRIBUTE—GARFIELD COUNTY 1999 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this moment to recognize the career of one of Garfield County's community leaders, and recipient of the Garfield County 1999 Employee of the Year award, Judy Blakeslee. In doing so, I would like to honor this individual who, for many years, has exhibited dedication and experience to the Sheriff's Department of Garfield County.

As a Civil Deputy for the last 18 years, Judy handles restraining orders, evictions, garnishment of wages and custody orders in the county. Before becoming a Civil Deputy, Ms. Blakeslee spent her first year as Garfield County's Animal Control Officer. She took her role as a Civil Deputy to another level. She would go out of her way to aid displaced and needy families to the best of her ability.

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Judy Blakeslee has more than proven herself as a valuable asset to the Sheriff's Department of Garfield County, therefore, receiving this award. This achievement recognizes her compassion, professionalism and dedication to her County.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I say thank you to Judy Blakeslee on a truly exceptional career as a Garfield County employee. Ms. Blakeslee's dedicated service stands out and sets a standard for those who follow.

In conclusion I would note that as a police officer and attorney-at-law I had the privilege to work with Judy. I felt fortunate to have her as a friend and as a coworker.

CONGRATULATING THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the attention of the House to a recent article in the Chicago Tribune about one of our oldest friends . . . the U.S. Government Printing Office. I have a real appreciation of the GPO, having started as a printer's apprentice in 1968 as a member of Houston Typographic Union Local 87.

The article is profuse in its praise of the GPO, stating that while the agency usually "wears a low profile," the service that it provides the Congress and the Nation is absolutely crucial in our democratic system of government. In noting the vast range of publications the GPO handles—from the daily CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to the Findings of Fact in the Microsoft case—the article describes how the GPO has moved from a traditional ink-on-paper factory to a widely heralded provider of Government information over the Internet.

It is a success story that is worthy of everyone's attention.

A generation ago, the GPO had a workforce of 8,500. Today, there are about 3,300, yet not only does the GPO continue to print government publications, it is now a key player in the world of online government information. The incredible success of cutting staff by more than 50 percent while expanding services to Congress and the Nation is virtually without comparison.

The GPO's expert use of technology has made this achievement possible—technology which has transformed the way the GPO processes printing, and technology which makes it possible for the public to download more than 20 million publications a month from the GPO's online service, GPO Access.

Mr. Speaker, this is an incredible achievement, and I include the text of this excellent article for all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

We are fortunate, indeed, to have an agency of this caliber, with its expert workforce and its record of savings and technological achievement, working in support of the Congress and the American people.

[From the Chicago Tribune, Tues., Mar. 7, 2000]

FROM THE STARR REPORT TO WHITE HOUSE MENUS, GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE IS PAPERWORK CENTRAL

(By Glen Elsasser)

WASHINGTON—In a fortresslike complex near Capitol Hill, Kenneth Fatkin occupies the front lines of government. Though safely distanced from the frenzy of politics, he still confronts the handiwork of legions of federal agencies, Congress and the White House, handiwork that affects the lives of millions of Americans.

Amid shelves of reference books, Fatkin on a recent morning was scanning a set of proposed rules from the Federal Aviation Agency about the takeoff and landing of airplanes. Despite the abstruse language, he quickly marked up the page.

Fatkin works for the Government Printing Office, an agency that considers itself the largest supplier of government informational materials in the world. Those materials include everything from Independent Counsel